smuggling has been reported to the Government during the current financial year. There is no material to assume failure of Customs Authorities to prevent smuggling in the area.

Pending cases before the Shillong Bench of Guwahati High Court

2628. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases pending for disposal before the Shillong Bench of Guwahati High Court till the 31st of March, 1996;

(b) whether there is a proposal to appoint more regular Judges for the Bench;

(c) if so, by when it will be done; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINSITRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) As per information furnished by the Registry of Gauhati High Court, as on 31.3.1996, 588 cases were pending in the Shillong Bench of the Gauhati High Court.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The allocation of Judges to different benches of the Gauhati High Court is done by the Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court.

Shifting of popular Daily News update 'AAJ TAK' to Late Hours

2629. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the popular daily news update in Hindi, namely "AAJ TAK" has been shifted to late hours; and the parallel English daily news update "The News Tonight" has been totally taken away from Doordarshan; and

(b) if so, in what circumstances and for what reasons?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINSITER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The 9.30 p.m. slot has, now been given to a programme having better revenue earning potential and whose producers have agreed to pay the revised sponsorhip fee for this slot along with some Minimum Guarantees of Revenue.

Telecast of the "News Tonight" programme has been discontinued by Doordarshan following the agreement entered into by the producers of the programme for the production of news programmes in Hindi and English for telecast on the foreign channel, 'Star

Proposal to Simplify Election procedure

2630. SHRI LAKHIRAM AGARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) steps proposed to be taken or taken to simplify election procedure;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) whether introduction of voting machine would help in cutting down Government's expenses on election; and

(d) if so, percentage of expenditure likely to be saved approximately by introduction of voting machine?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) and (b) The Government had asked the Election Commission in May, 1993 itself to use the existing electronic voting machines in elections wherever feasible. Certain other measures to simplify election procedure have also been given effect to by the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 1996.